

House of Representatives to respond to the Coast Guard by ensuring they have the resources they need to carry out their missions in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have joined with my Committee Chairman, Mr. LOBIONDO, in crafting language in this bill that not only provides the appropriations and authorizations for the Coast Guard, but more importantly, gives proper recognition and gratitude for their efficient response to the Hurricane disaster. Make no mistake of it Mr. Speaker, while there was confusion and chaos, it was the Coast Guard that was there, on the ground saving lives.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF  
REPRESENTATIVE LLOYD MEEDS

**HON. RICK LARSEN**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 15, 2005*

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, today we mourn. We also remember. We mourn the loss of a public servant who worked to make government the best it could be. We remember his accomplishments and celebrate his legacy.

And we take heart in the memories that we share of this great man.

Congressman Lloyd Meeds was not a distant politician. He was a friend and a neighbor whose public work was devoted to maintaining and improving our unique quality of life for generations to come. He was, in the words of his colleague Congressman Morris Udall, "a workhorse rather than a showhorse", a "glutton for the tough, detailed work that so many of us shun."

These words paint an accurate picture of a true public servant and statesman. And they set a standard of excellence for those of us now serving in Congress.

Congressman Meeds's tough, detailed work played a major role in creating Head Start and the Youth Conservation Corps. He took a stand as one of the first to support Title IX, the law that bans gender discrimination in our schools.

He set an example for me personally with his work to preserve and protect land for future generations by brokering the North Cascades Act that created the North Cascades National Park and the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. He later worked for a resolution to ensure passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, a vital piece of legislation that will protect some of the most pristine land in the United States for generations to come.

His accomplishments were many, and his commitment to the Pacific Northwest was unyielding. That commitment certainly did not end when he left Congress.

The State of Alaska declared February 28, 2005 "Lloyd Meeds Day" as a heartfelt thank-you for the Congressman's lifetime of effort on behalf of the environment and Native Americans.

This is the legacy of Congressman Lloyd Meeds—a passionate and tireless advocate for the causes he embraced.

We mourn a loss today. Congressman Meeds will be missed. The foundation he laid, however, provides the basis for the diversity

and strength we see in our communities today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ERNEST J. ISTOOK, JR.**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 15, 2005*

Mr. ISTOOK. Mr. Speaker, my absence today from the House chamber is due to my traveling to New Orleans and Oklahoma City to assess the damage and relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. My return to Washington, DC is not possible until after conclusion of today's legislative business. As a member of the Committee on Appropriations and the vice chair of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security I am involved in the direct funding of our government's efforts in saving lives, stabilizing this devastated area, restoring order, mitigating still uncertain conditions, and beginning the rebuilding process that can assist in returning prosperity and making people whole. During my visit to New Orleans, I will witness firsthand the scope of the devastation, observe relief operations, and meet with some of the more than 2,100 members of the Oklahoma Army National Guard serving in New Orleans. My trip concludes with my traveling to Oklahoma City to meet with hurricane evacuees and relief workers.

Since Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast August 31, Oklahomans have been at the forefront of relief efforts. Since August 30, the Oklahoma National Guard has supplied four U860 Blackhawk helicopters, airlifted tens of thousands of pounds of food and water to New Orleans and supplied much-needed security and rescue efforts in the midst of looting and flooding that followed the hurricane's landfall. Oklahomans have also opened up their homes and businesses to help the relief effort, and have worked with the Red Cross in opening shelters for those evacuees throughout Oklahoma.

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO  
ESTABLISH A SPECIAL INSPECTORS  
GENERAL COUNCIL FOR  
HURRICANE KATRINA

**HON. TODD RUSSELL PLATTS**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 15, 2005*

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to establish a Special Inspectors General Council for Hurricane Katrina. As Members of Congress charged with overseeing the operation and accountability of the Federal government, we have a responsibility to ensure that all funds we authorize and appropriate are spent for their intended purposes. In the wake of the terrible devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, we have already appropriated more than \$60 billion for the immediate relief effort, and this amount is, no doubt, only the beginning. These funds must be spent in a way that ensures that the people in the affected areas of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama are able to recover.

Assuring accountability for relief and recovery projects is imperative. The public's trust in

their government has been shaken in the aftermath of this disaster. We must assure the American people that we are being appropriately prudent with their money. Any dollar lost to fraud or waste is a dollar that does not make it to someone who is in need. This funding is too important to be misspent, and that is precisely why I am introducing this legislation today.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Management, Finance, and Accountability, I have seen firsthand the good work of agency inspectors general. Their unique relationship with both the agencies they oversee and the Congress, to whom they report, provides an ideal check on the system. Inspectors general have long stood as a bulwark against fraud and mismanagement.

While some in the Congress have called for the appointment of one Special IG to oversee hurricane relief funding, this proposal raises concerns. The most troubling aspect of the legislation is a requirement that this Special IG be appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security within three days. This is contrary to the intent of the Inspector General Act. The IG Act requires that an IG with this much authority—one who would potentially oversee the expenditures of up to \$200 billion—be appointed by the President with the advise and consent of the Senate. Under the Special IG proposal, we would face the unworkable problem of having several IGs with Senate confirmation reporting to a political appointee who reports to one cabinet secretary.

The response to Hurricane Katrina will involve the full breadth of Federal resources. It will touch nearly every Federal agency. What we need is a coordinated response from the IGs now in place throughout government. We need IGs with institutional knowledge unique to their own agencies to work together under the leadership of the Department of Homeland Security. This Council will draw on the resources of over 5,000 auditors and investigators who are already in place today.

The hurricane relief money is being spent right now. It is important that this coordination begin as quickly as possible. We cannot take a chance on a single Special Inspector General who mayor may not have the depth and breadth of knowledge to ensure full accountability at all the Federal agencies that will be part of this effort. We have no time for a learning curve, especially when we have the ability to leverage the considerable resources already available. A Special IG Council will enable this important work, which in many cases is already underway, to be completed in the most effective manner.

HONORING THE BEDFORD  
GAZETTE

**HON. BILL SHUSTER**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 15, 2005*

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Bedford Gazette, a daily newspaper serving Bedford County, Pennsylvania. On September 21, 2005, the Bedford Gazette will celebrate its 200th anniversary. A solid institution in Bedford, I grew up with the Gazette in our family's home.